

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SOUTH-WESTERN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

PROFESSIONAL STAFF
3223/page 1 of 9

NEW POLICY - VOL. 35, NO. 1

STANDARDS - BASED SCHOOL COUNSELOR EVALUATION

The Board of Education is responsible for a standards-based school counselor evaluation policy which conforms to the framework for the evaluation of school counselors as approved by the State Board of Education and aligns with the "Standards for School Counselors" as set forth in State law.

The Board of Education adopts the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System (OSCES) as approved by the State Board of Education.

The Board believes school counselors play a critical role in supporting student learning and success and maintaining a positive school environment. The standards based system of school counselor evaluations is designed to provide meaningful and consistent feedback to support counselor professional growth and inform employment decisions.

This policy shall be implemented as set forth herein and shall be included in the collective bargaining agreement with the South-Western Education Association, and in all extensions and renewals thereof.

This policy has been developed in consultation with school counselors.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent/Designee to establish and maintain an ongoing Evaluation Development Committee, with continuing participation by District counselors for the express purpose of recommending necessary changes to the Board for the appropriate revision of the policy.

Definitions

"OSCES" - Stands for the Ohio School Counselor Evaluation System as adopted by the Ohio State Board of Education, or as otherwise modified by the State Board of Education.

"School Counselor"– For purposes of this policy, "school counselor" means an employee who holds a license issued pursuant to O.A.C. 3301-24-05 by the Ohio Department of Education in the area of school counseling and who is assigned to a position in that capacity.

Teachers and other employees who do not meet this definition are not subject to evaluation under this policy. Full time bargaining unit members who do not meet the definition will be evaluated in accordance with Board policy and/or utilizing the evaluation procedures of the collective bargaining agreement in effect between the Board and the South-Western Education Association.

"Credentialed Evaluator"- For purposes of this policy, each counselor subject to evaluation will be evaluated by a person who has completed the OSCES training as required by the Ohio Department of Education.

The Board shall authorize the Superintendent/Designee to approve and maintain a list of credentialed evaluators as necessary to effectively implement this policy.

"Evaluation Cycle" – is the period of time for the completion of the evaluation procedure. The evaluation cycle is completed when selected student metrics are combined with the counselor performance ratings resulting from performance assessments on the standards that are conducted for the current school year to assign a summative evaluation rating.

"Evaluation Factors"– refers to the multiple measures that are required by law to be used in the school counselor evaluation procedures, including performance on all six (6) areas identified by the standards and the ability to produce positive outcomes using student metrics. School counselors will receive a score in each of the six standards and the student metrics, which shall be weighted equally (1/7 of the final summative score).

"Evaluation Framework" – means the standards-based framework adopted by the State Board of Education for the evaluation of school counselors in accordance with R.C. 3319.113.

"Evaluation Instruments" – refers to the forms used by the school counselor's evaluator as developed locally.

"Evaluation Procedure" – the procedural requirements set forth in this policy are intended to provide specificity to the statutory obligations established under R.C. 3319.113 and to conform to the framework for the evaluation of school counselors developed under R.C. 3319.113.

"Evaluation Rating" – means the final summative evaluation level that is assigned to a school counselor pursuant to terms of this policy. The evaluation rating is assigned at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle when the school counselor performance rating is combined with the results of student metrics. Each completed evaluation will result in the assignment of one (1) of the following evaluation ratings to Accomplished, Skilled, Developing, or Ineffective.

"High Performing School Counselor" - is a school counselor who earns a summative rating of "Accomplished" or "Skilled" on his/her most recent evaluations.

"School Counselor Performance" – is the assessment of a school counselor's performance on each of the six State-adopted standards, resulting in a performance rating. As an evaluation factor, the school counselor performance dimension is based on direct observations of a counselor's practice by a credentialed evaluator. Performance results are reported as a performance rating that may be coded as "1" indicating lowest performance to "4" indicating highest performance.

"Student Metrics" - measure(s) that assess a school counselor's ability to produce positive student outcomes.

Standards-Based School Counselor Evaluation

School Counselor evaluations will utilize multiple factors, with the intent of providing meaningful feedback to each school counselor and assigning an effectiveness rating based upon school counselor performance and the counselor's assessment on selected student metrics.

- A. Accomplished;
- B. Skilled;
- C. Developing; or
- D. Ineffective.

The specific standards and criteria for distinguishing between these ratings/levels of performance shall be the same as those developed by the State Board of Education, which are incorporated herein by reference.

The Superintendent/Designee shall annually cause to be filed a report to the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) in accordance with requirements mandated by ODE. The Board will utilize the ODE's guidelines for reporting this information.

Assessment of School Counselor Performance

School Counselor performance will be evaluated during formal observations and periodic informal observations. Such performance will be assessed through a holistic process by trained and credentialed evaluators based upon the following *Ohio Standards for School Counselors*:

- A. Comprehensive School Counseling Program Plan;
- B. Direct Services for Academic, Career and Social/Emotional Development;
- C. Indirect Services: Partnerships and Referrals;
- D. Evaluation and Data;
- E. Leadership and Advocacy; and
- F. Professional Responsibility, Knowledge and Growth.

Formal and Informal Observations

- A. School Counselors shall be evaluated based on at least two (2) formal observations of at least thirty (30) minutes each and informal observations each school year.
- B. A high performing school counselor will be evaluated less frequently as follows.
 - 1. A school counselor who receives a rating of "Accomplished" on his/her most recent evaluation may be evaluated every three (3) years, as long as the counselor's metrics for student outcomes for the most recent year for which data is available, is "skilled" or higher. If the determination is made to evaluate every three (3) years, the counselor will nevertheless be provided with at least one (1) observation and conference in any year that such counselor is not formally evaluated.
 - 2. A school counselor who receives a rating of "Skilled" on his/her most recent evaluation may be evaluated every other year, as long as the counselor's metrics for student outcomes for the most recent year for which data is available, is "skilled" or higher. If the determination is made to evaluate every other year, the counselor will nevertheless be provided with at least one (1) observation and conference in any year that such counselor is not formally evaluated.

Evaluations will be completed by May 1st and each school counselor will be provided a written report of the results of his/her evaluation by May 10th. Written notice of nonrenewal will be provided by June 1st.

Formal Observation Procedure

The observations will not be conducted when school counselors are engaged in counseling activities with students that require confidentiality.

All formal observations shall be preceded by a conference between the evaluator and the employee prior to the observation in order for the employee to explain plans and objectives for the classroom situation to be observed.

Informal Observation/Walkthrough Procedure

The observations will not be conducted when school counselors are engaged in counseling activities with students that require confidentiality.

An informal observation is a formative assessment process that focuses on one (1) or more of the components included in the State-adopted standards.

An informal observation should be of sufficient duration to allow the evaluator to assess the focus of the observation.

Data gathered from the observation must be placed on the appropriate designated form. Written feedback from observations shall be provided after the observation. The school counselor and/or evaluator may request a face to face meeting to discuss observations relative to the identified focus of the informal observation.

- A. Informal observations shall not unreasonably disrupt and/or interrupt the work day.
- B. A final debriefing and completed form must be shared with the employee within a reasonable amount of time.

Assessment of Student Metrics

The counselor and evaluator will select student metrics that will be utilized for school counselor evaluations in the areas of academics, career, and social emotional development.

Data from these approved measures of student growth will be scored on four (4) levels, with a score of "1" being the lowest and "4" being the highest.

Final Evaluation Procedures

Each school counselor's performance rating for each of the six (6) standards will be combined with the assessment of student metrics to produce the final summative.

The evaluator shall provide that each evaluation is submitted to the school counselor for his/her acknowledgement by written receipt. If signed by the employee, the receipt is to be sent to the Superintendent/Designee as soon as received.

Professional Growth Plans and Professional Improvement Plans

Based upon the results of the annual evaluations conducted in accordance with this policy, each school counselor must develop either a professional growth plan or professional improvement plan as follows:

- A. School counselors with a final summative rating of "Accomplished" will develop a professional growth plan.
- B. School counselors with a final summative rating of "Skilled" will develop a professional growth plan collaboratively with their evaluator.
- C. School counselors with a final summative rating of "Developing" will develop a professional growth plan collaboratively with their evaluator. A building administrator must approve the professional growth plan.
- D. School counselors with a final summative rating of "Ineffective" will develop an improvement plan with their evaluator. A building administrator must approve the improvement plan.

Professional growth and improvement plans must be completed by October 31st each school year. The Board retains the discretion to place a school counselor on an improvement plan at any time based on deficiencies in any individual component of the evaluation system.

Board Professional Development Plan

In accordance with the State Board of Education's Statewide evaluation framework, the Board has adopted a specific plan for the allocation of financial resources to support the professional development of school counselors covered by this policy. The plan will be reviewed annually.

Retention and Promotion Decisions/Removal of Poorly Performing School counselors

The evaluations produced will serve to inform the Board on employment decisions, i.e., retention, promotion of school counselors, renewal of employment contracts, and the removal/nonrenewal of poorly performing school counselors.

Definitions:

"Retention"- for purposes of this policy refers to employment decisions on the question of whether or not to suspend a contract pursuant to a reduction in force, nonrenew a limited or extended limited contract, or terminate employment for good and just cause. In the case of a reduction in force, seniority will not be considered when making decision on contract suspensions, except in the instance of comparable evaluations. The decision to nonrenew or terminate the contract of a poorly performing school counselor may be informed by the evaluation(s) conducted under this policy. However, decisions to nonrenew or terminate an employment contract are not limited by the existence of this policy.

"Promotion"- as used in this context is of limited utility given the fact that school counselors covered by this policy are not currently employed in any discernible hierarchy. Nevertheless, when making decisions relative to such matters as determining employee assignments, the Board will consider school counselor performance as indicated by evaluations.

"Poorly Performing School Counselors"- refers to school counselors identified through the evaluation process set forth in this policy who demonstrate an inability and/or unwillingness to meet the reasonable expectations of this standards-based evaluation system.

"Comparable Evaluations"- since seniority may not be the basis for school counselor retention or other employment decisions, except when deciding between counselors who have comparable evaluations, this refers to counselors within the categories of "Ineffective," "Developing," "Skilled," and "Accomplished."

Removal of Poorly Performing School Counselors

Removal of poorly performing school counselors will be in accordance with the nonrenewal and termination statutes of the Ohio Revised Code and/or the relevant provisions of the collective bargaining agreement in effect between the Board and the South-Western Education Association.

Nothing in this policy will be deemed to prevent the Board from exercising its rights to nonrenew, terminate, or suspend a school counselor contract as provided by law and the terms of the collective bargaining agreement in effect between it and the South-Western Education Association. The evaluation system and procedures set forth in this policy shall not create an expectation of continued employment for employees on a limited contract that are evaluated under this policy. The Board reserves the right to nonrenew a school counselor evaluated under this policy in accordance with R.C. 3319.11 notwithstanding the school counselor's final summative rating.

R.C. 3319.02, 3319.11, 3319.113, R.C. 3319.16
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